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ERRATIC PLATFORMS OF THE DEMOCRACY.

BY THE HON. JUSTIN S. MORRILL, UNITED STATES SENATOR FROM VERMONT.

IN EVERY age, where liberty and human progress have made notable advances, there comes a time when a brood of stragglers in the rear appear to denounce the progress made as nothing worth, and to demand the restoration of the Bourbons with all of the conditions which once restricted the greater part of mankind to less of freedom, to less of the comforts of life, and to less of intellectual individuality, but which gave to a stupid aristocracy political supremacy. Against such progress the United States has heretofore had its recalcitrants, its Silver-greys, its Copper-heads, and now its Mugwumps.

Denied all protection by our British ancestors, the several States at the close of the War of Independence surrendered to the nation the sole power to protect domestic industries by a tariff on imports of foreign merchandise, and the logical result appears in the foremost act of Congress, July 4, 1789, under President Washington, as follows :

“Whereas it is necessary for the support of government, for the discharge of the debts of the United States, and the encouragement and protection of manufactures that duties be laid on goods, wares, and merchandise imported.”

This tariff act, the earliest of our fathers', admitted not only teas but all imported merchandise at a less rate of duty if imported in ships built and owned by citizens of the United States. It also imposed a specific and protective duty on cotton of three cents per pound, and authorized bounties to be paid on dried and pickled fish and on salted provisions when exported. This was the decisive way in which the gifted framers of the constitution practically administered it. The whole scope of the act, untrammelled by the mother country, clearly announced an American policy, and determined that our country should not become the mere “pasturage for the progeny of foreign kine.”

The Republican platform adopted by the Congressional caucus in 1800—and the Democratic party still claim that it then bore the name of Republican—contained as one of its planks the following :

“Encouragement of science and the arts in all their branches, to the end that the American people may perfect their independence of all foreign monopolies, institutions, and influences.”

Democratic Mr. Dallas, the Secretary of the Treasury, in his report on the protective tariff of 1816, stated what was true then and equally true to-day, that:

“There are few if any governments which do not regard the establishment of domestic manufactures as a chief object of public policy. The United States have always so regarded it.”

The tariff received every vote in the Senate except five, and three of the five were from New England. In the House of Representatives the bill was championed by Mr. Calhoun, who said : “ Gentlemen ought not to give in to the contracted idea that taxes were so much money taken from the people ; properly applied, the money proceeding from taxes was money put out to the best possible interest for the people.” The “ contracted ideas ” of Mr. Cleveland certainly need instruction, if not the birch rod of the schoolmaster.

The protective-tariff bill presented March 4, 1828, by Rollin C. Mallory, of Vermont, Chairman of the Committee on Manufactures, was accompanied by a report written by that eminent Democrat, Silas Wright, Jr., of New York. This bill, while the majority of both Houses of Congress was Democratic, contained specific, compound, square yard, and minimum duties, and all the grim features that are now so wont to set the teeth of Free-traders on edge, received in the Senate the votes of such distinguished Jacksonian Democrats as James K. Polk, Dutee J. Pearce, Martin Van Buren, James Buchanan, Silas Wright, Jr., Joel Yancey, Thomas H. Benton and Richard M. Johnson. Three of these distinguished men were subsequently elected to the Presidency by the Democratic party. Assuredly Van Buren, Buchanan, Wright, and Benton were not densely ignorant of practical political economy, nor of the constitutional doctrines of their party, but to-day they would have to retire as heretics and give place to those known as Democrats only because they say so and subscribe to the latest Chicago platform.

In 1840 the Democratic National Platform set forth :

“ That the constitution does not confer upon the general government the power to commence and carry on a general system of internal improvements.”

The immense subsidies of land to the Illinois Central and other railroads were granted under the lead of Mr. Douglas a few years later. They also then tolerated “ differences of opinion,” and therefore resolved not to nominate any one for Vice-President on the ticket with Mr. Van Buren, but there was not a word about the tariff.

In 1844 their platform favored “ the reoccupation of Oregon and the annexation of Texas,” with nothing about the tariff.

From 1789 to 1828 Democrats and Federalists, however widely apart on some other questions, practically agreed on the protection of home products. With such Southern statesmen long in the lead as Jefferson and Madison, Jackson and Benton, Clay and Calhoun, a tariff for home protection, as well as for revenue, was authoritatively fixed as the paramount and permanent American policy. If there had been any doubt in 1789 that this would not become our future national policy, it is not too much to say that the State-protection policy then practically prevailing would not have been surrendered, and our constitution could not have been ratified by the several States.

The Calhoun era of secession and nullification finally constrained the Democratic party to adopt the partisan tariff of 1846. This tariff put the same rate of duty on pig-iron and scrap-iron as upon manufactures of iron, steel, gold, or silver ; the same upon wool as upon Turkey and Wilton carpets, and more upon firewood, sugar, and molasses than upon manufactures of silk. These are only specimen bricks of the Walker tariff, which, after being horizontally amended in 1857, failed to give either protection or revenue sufficient for the ordinary support of the government. From 1847 to 1857 our imports, exclusive of specie, exceeded our exports by \$313,073,805, and the excess of our exports of specie amounted to \$258,853,228.

The tariff of 1861 was made largely specific and consequently more steadily protective. The compound duties on woollens by weight and ad valorem were there first introduced as compensatory to protective duties on wool, and, as far as possible, higher duties were imposed upon luxuries than upon articles of general

consumption. It also largely increased the number of articles on the free list.

This tariff, it may not be too much to say, contained the vertebræ upon which have been built all the subsequent protective-tariff statutes. The expense of the War of the Rebellion and its prodigious legacy of public debt, made a vast increase of revenue a public necessity. The rates of duty had to be increased because the protective home industries soon began to reduce prices and to limit the extent of imported articles from which revenue was obtainable. The increase of our population was wondrously large, notwithstanding the sore losses in the conflict of the Rebellion, but an annual revenue of sixty or seventy-five million dollars, once very adequate, suddenly had to be quadrupled. If this is now a burden it is a burden imposed by the unpatriotic Confederate action of those who now, perhaps, complain the most and bear the smallest share of it. Unquestionably the Free-traders of Southern States, on account of their far milder climate and their six million of colored citizens, contribute only a small share comparatively of tariff revenue, as they consume of dutiable foreign merchandise but a small part of what would be their due proportion according to their representative population.

For nearly sixty years of the republic a tariff for revenue, with incidental protection, was firmly established, and so revered by our fathers, and especially by the Democratic party, that no murmur was raised against it in any quarter, save by the "Nullifiers" of South Carolina, the chief of whom President Jackson wanted to hang. But modern Democracy has so lapsed and degenerated from its ancient opinions and principles that it is now ready to accept the doctrine of the rebel Confederate constitution in its national tariff platform, or the ideas and trickery of Tammany pettifoggers, if only the victors are baited with the promise of the spoils of office. That it may be seen whether or not this is unfounded criticism, it may be well to further resurrect some of these Democratic platforms, not long dead, but so tainted that it may be well for any old and time-honored Democrat either to shun them or to hold his nose.

In 1852 their platform announced :

"That the Democratic party will faithfully abide by and uphold the principles in the Kentucky and Virginia resolution of 1798 and 1799."

Some sly objections also against protection began to peep out,

“Like the toes of some maiden’s shoes
Beneath a mass of furbelows,”

and were presented as follows :

“That justice and sound policy forbid the Federal government to foster one branch of industry to the detriment of any other.”

There is no instance where any such detriment has been done by a protective tariff. On the contrary, the whole American continent is decorated with the monuments of its blessings. Fostering manufactures cannot fail to benefit all branches of industry, and especially of agriculture, by the creation of more consumers of agricultural and other products.

In 1856 their platform once more abided by the resolutions of 1798, and it was resolved :

“That it is time to declare for free seas and for progressive free trade throughout the world.”

Progressive free trade is throughout the world still a barren theory, everywhere practically on the retrograde, with many grumblers even in its British and only home, and not favored by any progressive European democrat, but in 1856 the Democratic platform makers here, possibly when half seas over, indulged in the foregoing brief and silly flirtation with free trade.

In 1860 the platform of both the Breckinridge and Douglas wings of the party, repeated the tariff resolution of 1856, and favored aid to a Pacific railroad. The party has twice been in favor of large land grants to railroads and twice against them. Both wings of the party flopped together in 1860 on the following resolution :

“That the Democratic party are in favor of the acquisition of Cuba on such terms as shall be honorable to ourselves and just to Spain.”

They again flirted with the tariff, but, as ever, very earnestly sought to give slavery greater chances of extension in our territories.

In 1864 the Democratic platform, with no mention of the tariff, showed the white feather and declared that, “after four years of failure to restore the Union by the experiment of war,” they demanded “that immediate efforts be made for a cessation of hostilities.” Their candidate for the Presidency, Gen. McClellan, spat upon the platform, and all but three of the States appear to have expectorated on both platform and candidate.

In 1868 their platform demanded "the payment of the public debt as rapidly as practicable," and when not otherwise expressed, that it should "be paid in lawful money of the United States," that is to say, "greenbacks." In the sixth resolution of their platform, "incidental protection to domestic manufactures" was demanded, but it was to be derived from the internal revenue laws. This dubious way of gathering grapes from thorns and figs from thistles was seriously proposed as follows :

"A tariff for revenue upon foreign imports, and such equal taxation under internal revenue laws as will afford incidental protection to domestic manufactures, and as will without impairing the revenue impose the least burden upon and best promote and encourage the great industrial interests of the country."

This hybrid protection of the domestic manufactures of iron, wool, and cotton by an internal revenue tax upon the domestic production of whiskey and tobacco was a Democratic discovery, but a dull world failed to see that it indicated anything more than the prepotency of some platform ass.

In 1872 the Democratic National platform contained the following words :

"That there are in our midst honest but irreconcilable differences of opinion with regard to the respective system of protection and free trade, we remit the discussion of the subject to the people in the congressional districts and the decision of Congress thereon, wholly free from executive interference or dictation."

The straight-out Democratic National platform at Louisville in 1872 would not indorse Horace Greeley for the Presidency, but not from hostility to any protective doctrine, as the following resolution will show :

"Resolved, that the interests of labor and capital should not be permitted to conflict, but should be harmonized by judicious legislation. While such a conflict continues, labor, which is the parent of wealth, is entitled to paramount consideration."

In 1876 the National Democratic platform demanded "a tariff for revenue only," and in 1880 the important change made read as follows : "We demand that all custom-house taxation shall be only for revenue," and the difference was as lucid as that between "an old cocked-up hat" and "a cocked-up old hat," but, as the learned author insisted, they were synonymous, and must both be interpreted the same as British free trade. But the very next Democratic Convention incontinently unloaded its free-trade

synonyms of 1876 and 1880, and, though rather sullenly, straddled back to the doctrine of moderate protection.

In 1884 the Democratic National platform, after the usual vituperative denunciation of Republicans, and a pledge to reduce the revenue to the lowest limit, contained the following :

“Knowing full well, however, that legislation affecting the operations of the people should be cautious and conservative in method, not in advance of public opinion, but responsible to its demands, the Democratic party is pledged to revise the tariff in a spirit of fairness to all interests. But in making reduction in taxes it is not proposed to injure any domestic industries, but rather to promote their healthy growth. . . . Moreover, many industries have come to rely upon legislation for successful continuance, so that any change of law must be at every step regardful of the labor and capital thus involved. . . . The necessary reductions in taxation can and must be affected without depriving American labor of the ability to compete successfully with foreign labor, and without imposing lower rates of duty than will be ample to cover any increased cost of production which may exist in consequence of the higher rate of wages prevailing in this country.”

These elaborate and fair promises, made perhaps only to deceive Democrats and laborers who favored protection, beyond doubt had their effect, and Mr. Cleveland thus obtained the Presidency.

In 1888 the Democratic National platform on the tariff was more compact but not less emphatic for the protection of American labor, and sought popular support in the following words:

“Our established domestic industries and enterprises should not, and need not, be endangered by a reduction and correction of the burdens of taxation. On the contrary, a fair and careful revision of our tax laws, with due allowance for the difference of the wages of American and foreign labor, must promote and encourage every branch of such industries and enterprises by giving them assurance of an extended market and steady and continuous operation.”

These lamb-like phrases failed to hide the wolf which had been uncovered by the proposals of a Democratic House of Representatives, as well as by the free-trade message of the Democratic President in 1887, and Mr. Cleveland was defeated in the election of 1888.

The Democratic National platform of 1892, as finally amended, no longer concealed the purpose of adopting British free trade to its utmost limit, not only promising to repeal the McKinley tariff, but reckless of all prior protection assurances, promulgates the latest revision of its tariff creed as follows:

"We denounce the Republican protective tariff as a fraud upon the labor of the great majority of American people for the benefit of the few. We declare it to be a fundamental principle of the Democratic party that the Federal government has not constitutional power to impose and collect tariff duties, except for the purpose of revenue only, and we demand that the collection of such taxes shall be limited to the necessities of the government when honestly and economically administered."

This cuts up all protection at the roots by the denial of constitutional powers to cover any idea but that of raising revenue, and would force the imposition of very high duties on sugar, teas, and coffee, that we do not and cannot produce, and very low duties on all manufactures that we can produce, in order to obtain sufficient revenue by giving up the American market to an enormous increase in the importation of foreign manufactures. So much of the party as were at Chicago suddenly swears eternal friendship to principles that admit of no modification, "for the enforcement and supremacy of which," Mr. Cleveland has declared, "all who have any right to claim Democratic fellowship must constantly and persistently labor."

If there was a shadow of doubt, as there is not, about the meaning of the present Democratic tariff platform, it would vanish upon sight of what was originally proposed and rejected to give place to the aforesaid final amendment. Their Committee had proposed to run the campaign of 1892 on the moderately protective platform of 1884, which professed to be regardful of both labor and capital, especially of the difference in cost of American and foreign labor, and not to injure domestic industries, but rather to promote their healthy growth. All this and more was suddenly stricken out and clearly demonstrates that it is the purpose now to bolt and rivet the Democratic party to the British doctrine of free trade, which Great Britain maintains solely for the purpose of keeping down the wages of British laborers to the lowest point, in order to obtain an overpowering export trade in competition with foreign nations, by which to get food for more than half of its population.

Even if the Democratic party should fail now to win, with the voters of one or two Northern States combined with a "solid South," and flop back in 1896 to the platitudes in behalf of home industries, it could not then be trusted. Much less can it be trusted now that it hoists the black flag and wages a war of absolute extermination against any and all tariff protection. The

issue tendered is that labor must take care of itself, and that capital must seek for protection in other countries.

For the last forty years the Democratic party platforms might have been properly advertised, like dramatic star actors, "to appear for this time only." They have long ceased to represent any abiding principle, and merely point, as may a wooden rooster on some barn, to the shifting currents of the wind.

For the past generation the melancholy history of the party has been so equivocal and desperate, and the platform botchery of its leaders so sterile of popular favor, that they are now ready to renounce all former pretensions of love for the men of home industries, as well as all regard for the general welfare of our native land. They would even offer unconditional free trade to our great British rival rather than reciprocity to the South American republics.

The Democratic party of the North purchases its alliance with the "Solid South" by the surrender of all protection to American industries and a tame submission to the precise terms of the late loved and lost Confederate constitution, which, after the grant of the power to lay and collect taxes and duties, concludes as follows :

"But no bounties shall be granted from the Treasury, nor shall any duties or taxes on importations from foreign nations be laid to promote or foster any branch of industry."

It is unnecessary to say that this Confederate prohibition, or anything like it, is not to be found in the constitution of the United States, and yet the Democratic party is now pledged to enforce and give it practical validity throughout the Union, though it is merely a free-trade ghost supposed to haunt the original Confederate States, where it once found an unhonored grave.

The erratic and contradictory declarations of National Democratic conventions on paper money, on internal improvements, and other subjects than the tariff, have long been conspicuous. For example, their convention in 1888 resolved as follows:

"That the territories of Washington, Dakota, Montana, and New Mexico are by virtue of population and development entitled to admission into the Union as States, and we unqualifiedly condemn the course of the Republican party in refusing statehood and self-government to their people."

And yet when the Republicans admitted to statehood four ter-

ritories in 1890, their admission was resisted and loud protestations came forth from Democrats that it was only Republican partisanship that conceived or consented to the policy, and not that the territories were entitled to admission.

The progenitors of the Democratic free-trade platforms, twelve and sixteen years ago, which led to the disastrous miscarriage of the party, do not appear to have learned any wisdom at the late Chicago Convention, and now seem to rejoice at again beholding the swelling front of the Democratic party suddenly pregnant with free trade. It was enough for their platform-makers to know that the party in power, the Republican party, supported the ancient Democratic doctrine of "a tariff for revenue with incidental protection," to arouse suspicion that it was all wrong and not Democratic. It was as clear that Republicans favored protection, as it was that Democrats formerly favored it, and that was enough to excite ever present partisan hostility to the principle of a protective tariff, forgetful that there were among our citizens millions of Democratic protectionists, and forgetful that they were assailing the character of statesmen who gave the Democratic party its earliest and greatest renown.

When Mr. Cleveland was defeated for the Presidency in 1888, it was often said by many of his Democratic supporters that his free-trade hobby, which he mounted in 1887, ran away with him. It has been asserted, also, that he became reluctant to again ride his balky steed, and proposed at the Chicago convention to mount in 1892 a much tamer and slower going Rozinante, but the Tammany braves and Hill Democrats—who had vociferously declared that Cleveland, if nominated, could not be elected—refused to further depreciate his political horsemanship, and therefore insisted in their platform upon again mounting him upon the same sore-backed free-trade hobby, apparently not caring a dime whether it should again run away with the jockey or not.

The Democratic leaders were obviously ready to enlist under any banner, Christian or Moslem, that was most distasteful to the faction that would not consent to the nomination of Mr. Hill. In the nomination of Mr. Cleveland their forlorn hope is to retain the support of the political dilettanti, best known as the Mugwumps, who were once successfully baited with "revenue reform," and believed to be now too lazy and gouty to escape the free-trade trap.

But Mr. Cleveland, when accepting the nomination in his speech, July 20th, appeared unready to accept that portion of the party platform which declares that the "government has no constitutional power to impose and collect tariff duties, except for the purposes of revenue only," and made his prompt dissent about so attacking "tariff laws" as follows :

"We need not base our attack upon questions of constitutional permission or legislative power."

The vituperative fertility shown, however, in high-seasoned commentaries on the theory of tariff protection will no doubt satisfy even free-trade Hotspurs that no one of them can lead where Mr. Cleveland will not follow. It may be true that he once committed himself against being a Presidential candidate for the second time, but evidently not against a third time. He will no doubt be equally adroit in adhering to his convictions on the tariff question.

For a whole century the American encouragement of the mechanical arts and manufactures has generally prevailed. This encouragement has absorbed in fixed investments the greater part of the surplus capital of the country. Outside of those engaged in agriculture, it has given remunerative employment to the largest number of American workingmen, skilled and life-trained in the arts and manufactures, and whose products surpass in annual amount those of any other people.

The Democratic party proposes that all this shall be suddenly changed and have no consideration. The issue they tender in the coming national contest is, that American capital and American labor shall have no more protection than foreign capital and foreign labor. If Americans will not work as cheaply as foreign artisans, they must hold the plow and hoe, and no longer fraternize with steam engines, but banish from their home all the labor-saving machinery to which they have given birth and for which they have the highest aptitudes.

For the past ten years it is believed that twenty-five million dollars have been annually taken from Northern States and invested in manufactures in the so-called "New South." The Democratic policy of free trade would confiscate all such irremovable investments as remorselessly as those of earlier birth and of infinitely greater magnitude in Northern and Western States, and

as entitled by the free-trade creed to no better treatment than that of aliens and enemies.

Laboring men may be told, as they were last year told by Mr. Gladstone, that we should not have "mills and factories to produce yarn and cloth which could be had cheaper abroad," but this would compel the great multitude now employed in "mills and factories" to change their vocation to that of increasing the crops of cotton, corn and wheat, reducing the prices of such crops for the benefit of foreign purchasers.

Free trade builds up a few great importing cities on the sea shore, and creates millionaires in foreign trade. It depopulates the rural districts, and has nothing but lip-service to offer those who toil for their daily bread. It would give to the latter the dearer cost of living and the 77 per cent. less of wages which free trade in England offers to those who labor. It already rejoices at every calamity which grieves home industries, and would make our imports always to exceed our exports, keep us always in debt and always poor.

Republicans believe that our government should have great and noble purposes, beyond the mere power to levy and collect taxes. They also hold that every heartbeat of political parties should be in harmony with the hum of diversified and universal industry, and that the political parties should contribute by their patriotism, faith, and good works to make our country great and prosperous—great in its political institutions, great in the wealth of its intellectual, moral and material achievements.

JUSTIN S. MORRILL.